

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4223

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 LENINGRAD 01178

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, UR

SUBJECT: PARTY OFFICIALS SHUFFLE IN LENINGRAD

1. REPORTING ON RESULTS OF APRIL 19 PLENUM MEETINGS OF
LENINGRAD CITY AND OBLAST PARTY COMMITTEES, VECHERNIY
LENINGRAD APRIL 19 ANNOUNCED THAT FIRST SECRETARY
LENINGRAD GORKOM B.I. ARISTOV HAD BEEN RELIEVED OF HIS
POSITION AND MEMBERSHIP IN GORKOM BUREAU IN CONNECTION
WITH HIS TRANSFER TO "RESPONSIBLE" (OTVETSTVENNAYA)
DIPLOMATIC WORK. LENINGRAD PRAVDA NEXT MORNING SAID
SIMPLY THAT HE WAS BEING TRANSFERRED TO DIPLOMATIC WORK
(WITHOUT QUALIFICATION).

2. LENINGRAD OBLAST SECOND SECRETARY YU. F. SOLOVYEV
WAS DESIGNATED TO REPLACE ARISTOV AS GORKOM FIRST
SECRETARY. HE WAS REPLACED IN TURN BY OBLAST PARTY
SECRETARY R. S. BOBOVIKOV. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF LENINGRAD
OBLAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OBLAST COUNCIL (LENOBSOVET)
A. S. SOKOLOV WAS NAMED TO BE SECRETARY AND MEMBER
LENINGRAD OBLAST COMMITTEE, PRESUMABLY TO REPLACE
BOBOVIKOV V. N. FONMIN, CHIEF OF TRANSPORT AND
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COMMUNICATION SECTION OF LENINGRAD OBLAST PARTY COMMITTEE,
WAS TRANSFERRED TO "OTHER WORK" AND REPLACED BY HIS
DEPUTY E. A. ROZHNOV. FINALLY, HEAD OF KIROV MILITARY
MEDICAL ACADEMY COLONEL GENERAL N. G. IVANOV WAS
PROMOTED BY STATUS OF CANDIDATE TO FULL MEMBER OF OBLAST
PARTY COMMITTEE.

3. COMMENT: PERSONNEL CHANGES WOULD APPEAR TO BE POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ONLY TO EXTENT THEY REPRESENT A STRENGTHENING OR DIMINUTION IN ROMANOV'S POWER BASE. INTERPRETATION DEPENDS ON WHETHER A) ARISTOV CAN BE IDENTIFIED AS ROMANOV SUPPORTER; B) DIPLOMATIC POST ARISTOV GETS REPRESENTS PROMOTION OR SHUNTING ASIDE; AND C) ROMANOV APPROVED ALL ELEMENTS OF SHUFFLE. FACT THAT THESE SHIFTS TOOK PLACE AT PLENUM PRESIDED OVER BY ROMANOV SUGGESTS THAT HE APPROVED AT LEAST BULK OF DECISIONS.

4. SOLOV'YEV HAS BEEN ROMANOV'S DEPUTY AND RELATIONS BETWEEN BOTH MEN OUTWARDLY APPEAR GOOD. LIKE ARISTOV, SOLOV'60)EV IS FULL CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER. HE WAS ALSO DEPUTY CHAIRMAN CITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1973-74. ROMANOV WOULD THUS SEEM TO HAVE PLACED AN EXPERIENCED PARTY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL IN KEY LENINGRAD JOB, FULLY CONSISTENT WITH OBJECTIVE HE ANNOUNCED IN LENGTHY APRIL 19 OBCOM PLENUM SPEECH (SEPTEL) OF "STRENGTHENING PARTY INFLUENCE ON ALL LINKS" OF ADMINISTRATION.

5. NAMING OF BOBOVIKOV TO REPLACE SOLOV'YEV ALSO REPRESENTS LOGICAL MOVE UPWARD OF PERSON WHOSE APPOINTMENT TO CC CENTRAL AUDITING COMMISSION AT 25TH PARTY CONGRESS SUGGESTED HE HAD POLITICAL FUTURE. FOMIN'S REMOVAL PRESUMABLY REFLECTS CONTINUED CRITICISM OF TRANSPORTATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WEAKNESSES, NOTABLY IN MUNICIPAL SERVICES TO THE SUBURBS.

6. IT IS NOT EXCLUDED THAT ARISTOV'S HANDLING OF HIMSELF ON PARTY DELEGATIONS MADE HIM LOGICAL CANDIDATE TO REPLACE ONE OF SIXTEEN SOVIET AMBASSADORS WHO ARE FULL CC MEMBERS. IF ARISTOV REMOVAL REPRESENTED DEMOTION, HE CERTAINLY GAVE NO SIGN OF IT AT LENIN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS ON APRIL 21 (AT WHICH VALENTIN MIKHAILOVICK NIKIFOROV, RATHER NEW FIFTH RANKING GORKOM SECRETARY GAVE ANODYNE ADDRESS). INDEED, ARISTOV APPEARED QUITE JOVIAL SITTING BESIDE A SOBER OR NERVOUS SOLOV'YEV WHO CHAIRED MEETING, AND A PREOCCUPIED ROMANOV, WHO FIRST DISCUSSED SOME TEXT WITH BOBOVIKOV (ON HIS LEFT) AND THEN APPEARED TO GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOV'YEV ON HIS RIGHT. DIPLOMATIC AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE DURING INTERMISSION VIRTUALLY CONFIRMED RUMOR THAT ARISTOV WILL BECOME SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO WARSAW, REPLACING S. A. PILOTOVICH, WHO (WE UNDERSTAND) HAS BEEN SEVEN YEARS THERE AND ALSO CAME FROM RELATIVELY MODEST PARTY POSITION. WHILE DIPLOMATIC ASSIGNMENT HAS MEANT DEMOTION FOR SOME HIGH PARTY OFFICIALS IN PAST, IN ARISTOV'S CASE IT COULD BE STEP ON ROAD TOWARD ASSIGNMENT IN CC APPARATUS CONNECTED WITH

FOREIGN AFFAIRS. VIEWED IN THIS LIGHT, ROMANOV MAY HAVE
USEFUL FUTURE ALLY IN ARISTOV. ON OTHER HAND, SHOULD
POWER STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESSION INTENSIFY IN COMING MONTHS,
ROMANOV MIGHT HAVE PREFERRED TO HAVE ARISTOV AS CC MEMBER
CLOSER AT HAND. MY FINNISH COLLEAGUE, OLD SOVIET HAND,
ASSUMES ROMANOV WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REMOVE ARISTOV
BEFORE NOW, IF HE HAD WISHED.

6. AT VERY LEAST, THEREFORE, UPWARD MOVEMENT OF TWO MEN
WITH CENTRAL COMMITTEE POSITIONS CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH
ROMANOV'S OBLAST APPARATUS WOULD SEEM TO REFLECT ANOTHER
MOVE BY ROMANOV TO STRENGTHEN BOTH PARTY LEADERSHIP AND

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AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 LENINGRAD 01178

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, UR

SUBJECT: PARTY OFFICIALS SHUFFLE IN LENINGRAD

HIS OWN INFLUENCE IN LENINGRAD. IMPLICATION, IF ANY, OF
ARISTOV MOVE FOR ROMANOV'S LONGER TERM ASPIRATION ARE
MORE MURKY. BUCHANAN

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